

3. 1 John 2:18-29 of a Verse by Verse Study of the Letters of John and Jude

The contrast of walking in the light to walking in darkness in the preceding verses concluded with the exhortation not to love the world. John taught that the world and its desires pass away in verses 15-17:

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

In 1 John 2:18-29, John will forecast the coming of the antichrist and the counterfeit truths attendant to the false doctrine.

The Last Hour and the Antichrist

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

John begins this section by warning of what they had already heard; namely, that the antichrist is coming. There are several important points in this passage. This is the *last hour* speaks to the end of the revelation of the mystery of God. The antichrists who have gone out from among the Christians signal this. The last hour is synonymous with other expressions that show that we are in the last days – a time marked by the conclusion of God's revelation and the rise of false teachers, called liars by John in verse 22: "22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son." Peter identified these false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1:

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.

On several occasions, Paul related the last days to the rise of false teachers within the church. In Acts 20:28-30, he forecast:

28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

1 Tim 4:1-2, Paul identified these false teachers as coming from within the faith and following the things taught by demons. Paul, just as John, is certain these are liars: "4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

Paul describes a man of lawlessness in 2 Thess 2:3-4, who fits John's description of the antichrist:

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Paul, just like John, identifies the lawless one in the most unflattering words in 2 Thess 2:9-10:

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those

who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Both apostles use the words *counterfeit* and *liar* to describe the nature of the antichrist, the lawless one.

John's use of the word *antichrist* in the singular and plural forms depicts a spirit of antichrist broader than the individual practitioners who spread false teaching. Paul calls the antichrist the man of lawlessness; and in the Revelation, John records the story of the second beast, who is the false prophet in Rev 19:20:

20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The fate of the antichrist – the false prophet, the man of lawlessness – is the same as the fate of the devil in Rev 20:10: "10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." One way to grasp the correspondence of light to darkness is to understand that light is the place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and darkness is the place of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet – the antichrist.

The Holy One and the Truth

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us – even eternal life.

Our divine appointment – metaphorically, *anointing* – is from the Holy One. Used here and elsewhere in the New Testament, *Holy One* refers to Christ and not to the Holy Spirit as some would teach. Peter defined Jesus as the Holy One in John 6:68-69, "68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." Peter cited David to establish Jesus as the Holy One in Acts 2:27-28:

27 because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.

The anointing relates directly to knowing the truth. The major premise of the teaching is: ALL OF YOU ANOINTED KNOW THE TRUTH. The minor premise is: NO LIE COMES FROM THE TRUTH. The conclusion is: THE ANTICHRIST IS A LIAR AND CANNOT BE ANOINTED BY THE HOLY ONE. Any one who denies Jesus as Christ is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. The truth is that one cannot deny the Son and acknowledge the Father.

In order to keep that which we have heard from the beginning we must believe and hold to John's declaration in 1 John 1:2-3:

2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

If we hold to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, we have eternal life.

Remaining in Him

26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in him.

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

John writes about those who are trying to lead the Christians away from the Lord. All Christians come to the Lord, believing that he is the Son of God and obeying him. Since Christians know and obey in order to receive the anointing, they do not need anyone to teach them this truth. The anointing goes beyond the fundamental belief in Christ as the Son of God and teaches us all things. Peter phrased this same idea in 2 Peter 1:3: “3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

Verse 27 concludes: “Remain in him.” John gives remaining in him a permanent quality in verse 28 where he says, “Continue in him.” The purpose is to be confident and unashamed before him when he appears.

John closes this chapter with another well-reasoned argument: he is righteous; everyone who does right is born of him. Being born of him brings immediately to mind John’s record of the savior’s own words in John 3:5-6, “5 Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.’” Paul also taught in 2 Cor 5:17-18, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” The water of the new birth is the water of baptism according to Paul in Rom 6:4, “4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” The Spirit of the new birth is the Holy Spirit through whom we are renewed in Titus 3:5-7:

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

The renewal by the Holy Spirit comes by the word according to Eph 5:25-28:

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

John closes the chapter with this same conclusion as that of these scriptures, “Everyone who does what is right has been born of him.” Those who do not know the truth, or who knowing it, do not do it, are not born of him.